THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

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SELECT YOUR LPG DISTRIBUTOR SCHEME TO GET ROLLING SOON

An upcoming pilot project in Ranchi, Pune, Chandigarh, Gurgaon and Coimbatore to give customers the right to choose distributors

AIM TO FOSTER HEALTHY COMPETITION

The pilot project is a precursor for a national launch. While booking a refill through a mobile app/customer portal, you will see a list of distributors along with their ratings. You can choose any distributor from the list and rate their service. The idea is to give you a wider choice of distributors, while fostering a healthy competition among dealers to retain their base

GIVING YOU MORE VALUE FOR MONEY

- The drive to offer more value for money comes a year after the govt stopped subsidising refills not covered under Ujjwala Yojana
- The subsidy was nixed after an oil price plunge brought refill cost on a par with subsidised rates of around ₹600. Though the prices have since crossed ₹800 a refill, subsidy has not been reinstated

28 crore

DOMESTIC LPG CUSTOMERS IN INDIA AS OF 2020

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath with Union Home Minister Amit Shah, in New Delhi on Thursday | SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Lockdown stays in 11 dists, curbs to ease elsewhere

ANUSHA RAVI @ Bengaluru

WHILE the existing lockdown restrictions will continue in 11 districts of Karnataka, all other districts will have some relaxation, come Monday. Following a meeting with officials, ministers and members of the Technical advisory Committee, Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa announced a set of relaxations that will come into effect from June 14 when the current lockdown ends.

While weekend and night curfews have made a comeback, autos and taxis will be allowed to ply. Public transport will, however, remain prohibited. While a detailed order copy clarifying the new relaxation guidelines are expected on Friday, the CM laid out the basics on Thursday evening.

CAUTIOUS OPENING UP (FROM 6 AM ON JUNE 14)

- Essential shops, hotels, bars: **6 am to 2 pm**
- Street vendors, hawkers: **6 am and 2 pm**
- Parks to be open: **5 am to 10 am**
- Autos and taxis: **Cap of 2 passengers**
- Factories permitted: **50 pc staff**
- Garment factories: **30% staff**
- Public transport: **Not allowed**
- Weekend curfew: **7 pm on Friday to 5 am on Monday**
- Night curfew: **7 pm to 5 am**

ALL OTHER GUIDELINES TO CONTINUE

KARNATAKA	JUNE 9	JUNE 10
Fresh cases	10,959	11,042
Recoveries	20,246	15,721
Deaths	192	194

NATIONWIDE	JUNE 9	JUNE 10
Fresh cases	92,596	94,052
Recoveries	1,62,664	1,51,367
Deaths	2,219	6,148

TAKE YOUR SHOT
June 9: 31,31,759 doses
June 10: 30,32,675 doses
TOTAL DOSES: 24,58,47,212

"The existing lockdown restrictions will continue Chikkamagalur, Shivamogga, Davanagere, Mysuru, Chamarajanagar, Hassan, Dakshina Kannada, Bengaluru Rural, Mandya, Belagavi and Kodagu districts due to high positivity rates. No change in existing lockdown restrictions will be made for these districts. The local officials have been given the authority to discuss with the district in-charge ministers and introduce more restrictions, if required," Yediyurappa said before announcing relaxations for other districts.

"In all other districts, some relaxations will come into effect from 6 am of June 14 and will remain in place till June 21. All factories will be allowed to open with a cap of 50 per cent staff, but for garment factories, the cap will be 30 per cent staff," the CM said. **CONTINUED ON: P4**

All essentials shops can function from 6 am to 2 pm instead of the existing 10 am. All construction activities will be allowed

BS Yediyurappa, Chief Minister

Cabinet shuffle buzz on, Yogi to meet Modi today

Pressure from leadership to allocate plum portfolio to a former PMO man in ministry

MANISH ANAND @ New Delhi

AMID hectic parleys within the BJP to control damage in Uttar Pradesh after the second wave of the pandemic left a devastating trail, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Thursday called on Union Home Minister Amit Shah. Adityanath is slated to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday, with indications suggesting that the CM may not be able to avoid a state Cabinet reshuffle.

Earlier, BJP chief J P Nadda briefed Modi on the inputs collated by party general secretary (organisation) B L Santhosh and state in-charge Radha Mohan Singh, who had camped in Lucknow for two days. Modi is reportedly closely monitoring the BJP's preparations for the state polls next year, with regular exchange of inputs between him and Nadda as well as RSS leaders.

While the CM had recently termed the buzz of a Cabinet reshuffle as media speculation, sources said he will eventually have to fall in line as the top leadership is keen on a few changes ahead of the February 2022 state polls. A K Sharma, MLC and former official in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), is widely speculated to get a key portfolio in the state Cabinet.

While the CM hasn't been amenable to the idea so far, a top ranking BJP functionary told this newspaper that Sharma would be given an important assignment in the state. Sharma, incidentally, was in the national capital when Adityanath called on Shah.

Sources said BJP leaders and top RSS functionaries concur that while Adityanath should lead the party in the polls, a few changes in his ministerial team are needed to dispel the perception that he's running a highly centralised administration, against which even the MPs and MLAs reportedly nurse grievances. However, the CM is known to enjoy the patronage of the RSS leadership.

For the record, Adityanath described his meeting with Shah as a courtesy call, saying he sought guidance.

K'taka to get ₹18K cr this fiscal to offset GST compensation shortfall

ANUSHA RAVI @ Bengaluru

TWO weeks after Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, said that the same formula as last year will be adopted this year as well to pay GST compensation to the state, Karnataka has received official communication that Rs 18,109 crore will be passed on to the state from the Union Government's borrowings.

It was estimated that the Centre will have to borrow Rs 1.58 lakh crore this fiscal year and pass it on to the states to offset losses arising out of GST implementation and the revenue slump due to the pandemic. In the last GST council meeting, Karnataka's representative and Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai had urged the Centre to borrow the shortfall amount and pass it on to the states.

For the fiscal year 2020-2021, Karnataka had received Rs 12,407 crore as GST compensation in loans borrowed by the Centre through a special window.

Despite this, the shortfall in revenue under the GST regime was an additional Rs 12,000 crore for Karnataka. This time around too, there are worries that the Rs 18,109 crore, which will be given in several installments spread over the year, may be woefully short.

The 'GST loan', availed by the Centre to make up for states' revenue loss, was in addition to increased borrowing limit that was given to the states to mop up more resources during the pandemic.

US to process student visa applications from June 14

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

THE US Embassy in India on Thursday said it will restart processing student Visa applications on June 14, bringing much-needed relief to the community worried over the uncertainty surrounding the procedures in the aftermath of the pandemic.

"Student visas remain a top priority and we are making every attempt to facilitate student travel in time for the fall semester. On June 14, we will open limited July and August student visa appointments at posts across India," it said.

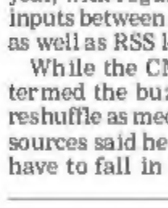
Students were advised to visit *https://ustraveldocs.com/in* to view slot availability and schedule appointments. "Prior to your visa interview, please review your I-20 program start date. Students beginning a new program with a start date on or after August 1 may travel to the US up to 30 days prior to the date and do not need to submit a request for a national interest exception," the embassy said.

The embassy said continuing students may also resume their programmes on or after August 1, and travel 30 days prior to the resumption date. "We are unable to approve expedited requests for Fall 2021 students. If your appointment date results in a potentially late start, please reach out to your school to discuss options," it said.

NIMHANS gets its third interim director, but no full-time head yet

BALA CHAUHAN @ Bengaluru

THE game of musical chairs continues at the National Institute of Mental Health & Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS), Bengaluru, with the Centre appointing an interim director for the apex mental health institute for the third time in a row, in the absence of a regular director. With mental health becoming a key and long-term fallout of the pandemic, the absence of a national policy and framework on mental health is being acutely felt. A regular director of NIMHANS at an unprecedented time like this is not just a requirement, "it's a necessity," said sources.



"On the instructions of the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoH&FW), Senior Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Shekar Sheshadri, has been appointed as the officiating director until his retirement or until the regular director assumes charge of the post," NIMHANS stated in an official release on Thursday. Prof Sheshadri will look into the functions of the director till November 16, 2021 as per the MoH&FW order, dated June 9. **P7**

WITH THIS ISSUE

INDULGE

32 PAGES, INCLUDING 16 OF INDULGE (TABLOID)

From next year, pay ₹24.78 per ATM transaction after free monthly limit

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

WITHDRAWING cash from ATMs will be costlier from 1 January 2022 as the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has allowed banks to charge customers up to ₹21 per transaction (plus 18% GST, which makes it ₹24.78). Currently, the cap is ₹20 per transaction plus GST.

The increase, according to the RBI, is "to compensate the banks for the higher interchange fee and given the general escalation in costs".

While the banking regulator has set the upper limit, banks charge different rates within the limit. For example, SBI allows five free transactions in a month. Thereafter, it charges ₹10 plus GST for withdrawing money from its own machines. For non-SBI ATMs, this will be ₹20 plus GST. ICICI Bank levies a flat ₹20 plus GST from the fifth transaction onwards.

The RBI has also increased the interchange charge from ₹15 to ₹17 for each financial transaction and from ₹5 to ₹6 for non-financial transaction.

Interchange charges are the fees a bank pays to another lender when the former's customer uses the latter's ATM to withdraw cash.

According to the RBI, the first five transactions in a month will be free if customers use their own banks' ATMs. They are also eligible for free transactions (including financial and non-financial) from other bank ATMs – three transactions in metro centres and five transactions in non-metros.

These changes are based on the report from a committee formed by the central bank in 2019 to review ATM charges. The committee had submitted its report in July 2020.

The last time the interchange fee for ATM transactions was changed was in August 2012, while the charges payable by customers were last revised in August 2014.

THE LONG ROAD

Covid slams brakes on 10-lane NH work

A stretch of the Mysuru-Bengaluru Highway in Bidadi | EPN

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @ Bengaluru

IF you are waiting to zip down the 10-lane Bengaluru-Mysuru highway in 90 minutes, don't rev up yet. The project is all set to miss yet another deadline, this time due to the second wave of Covid-19.

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has taken up the work at an estimated cost of Rs 7,400 crore. The stretch includes nine major bridges, 44 minor bridges and four road overbridges and the project has been divided into two packages - Bengaluru to Nidaghatta in Maddur (56.2 km) and Nidaghatta to Mysuru (60 km). The highway will also have bypasses at Bidadi, Ramanagara, Channapatna, Maddur, Mandya and Srirangapatna.

In March 2014, the Union Ministry of Surface Transport announced expansion of the Bengaluru-Mysuru State Highway (SH-88) into a 10-lane National Highway (NH-275), covering a distance of 117 km from the NICE Road entrance in Bengaluru to the Ring Road junction in Mysuru. The project was supposed to start in 2018 and be completed by 2020 in 30 months' time. But, after much dilly-dallying, the work started only in early 2019 as there were issues including land acquisition, shifting of amenities and legal aspects. The deadline was then revised to 2021. **P2**

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